another tenant. She was sure to be smoking, which was even more forbidden. During rounds I would clutch the relief keys that hung from the ribbon dangling from my belt loop. I didn't want them to rattle. They made me feel like a cat with a bell on its collar, unable to catch mice. I'd walk softly as I approached Joan's door and very quietly insert the master key into her lock. Then I'd tap on her door and enter immediately without waiting for permission. I wanted to catch her.

Sometimes Frederick (not Fred) was there. After they got used to me, Joan would just keep smoking. Frederick (not Fred) would assure me that they weren't having sex. Joan was a virgin.

I also had to check the balconies. I'm not sure what for. It was something Babs did. I was supposed to shut and lock all the doors and make sure the windows on the stairways were all locked. Alice always did that herself. Her worldly possessions consisted of one dress, a few pairs of jeans and some T shirts. Nonetheless she would lock her door several times before leaving her room. She wouldn't let me sweep the floor unless she was there. She kept piles of old newspapers on an old coffee-table in her room. They were the classified sections. She was looking for another room. She saved them, although she never looked at them except just before I made her throw them out. Then she would open every page, study it, and stuff it into a green garbage bag. It would take her all day to throw out the pile.